hierarchy

Once you've decided what you want to say, the first formal task is to determine a clear hierarchy: that is, the order in which elements will be emphasized. When design elements are too evenly weighted, the audience quickly loses interest. This happens because the designer has not provided clear visual cues to help readers navigate the content. Designing a hierarchy is both an intuitive and logical process. Devices used to create emphasis include increased size, weight, and color. The hierarchy enables each level of emphasis or respective category (title, text, captions, images) to stand clearly apart from every other category.

visual path Effective compositions often have a major focal point that often appears larger and more emphatic than any other element in that environment. To direct the viewer's eye through the design, carefully distribute elements to create balance, tension, and movement.

white space

Have you ever looked through a magazine and been struck by an almost empty page with just one element on it? A simple page catches our attention not by shouting but by restraint. Think of white space as you do any visual element—notice and control the shape, volume, and placement to add emphasis and impact. The art of using white space involves what's left out as much as what's left in.

"Right and wrong do not exist in graphic design. There is only effective and non-effective communication." —peter bilak

symmetry and asymmetry are two strategies for achieving compositional balance. Symmetrical design is oriented on a central axis: the right side is a mirror image of the left. This technique lends stability and is often used in more formal communications like wedding invitations and announcements. Asymmetrical design achieves tension and order through the uneven distribution and balance of type, images, and color in space. Generally speaking, asymmetrical design attracts and holds your audience's attention longer because the visual relationships are not optically predictable.

contrast is among the most potent tools a designer can use to create impact and emphasis. Types of contrast are limited only by one's imagination. To name a few:

big/small
soft/hard
transparent/opaque
thick/thin
organic/structured
tall/wide
in-motion/static
many/few
smooth/rough
color/monochromatic

When you **juxtapose** an element with its opposite, the inherent qualities of that element stand out more, thereby increasing the overall dynamic of the design. When you create or crop images, several principles will help convey a stronger, clearer visual point-of-view. First, compose or crop with an eye for bold, graphic form, high contrast, and clear color. When denoting context, include only enough visual information to establish that context.

Showing part of a dog and not the entire dog will still say dog, yet may make a more interesting image. Experiment with scale— make something huge that's ordinarily tiny and vice versa. Try capturing your subject from a surprising angle— from above, underneath, even inside out.

color is a powerful communicator. More than perhaps any other visual element, color can set the mood or signal a subject area. Use color with discretion—one or two colors can have more impact than many, and such restraint often has the added benefit of being more economical to print.

underlying grid

A grid acts like a skeleton, providing structural support for your type and images. Build a grid when opening a new document by specifying the margins, number of columns, and gutter width. 3 POINT hierarchy, focal point, visual path, and asymmetrical balance The splinted hand, silhouetted for contrast and compositional interest, forms the central focal point, while the other elements create a consistent but subordinate layer below.

scale and cropping

Enlarge or reduce your subject in unexpected ways.
Crop out unnecessary detail and try bleeding images off edges—this helps achieve depth of field and adds interest.